

WEST LINDSEY DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the Meeting of the Prosperous Communities Committee held virtually via MS Teams and available to watch via <https://west-lindsey.public-i.tv/core/portal/home> on 16 March 2021 commencing at 6.30 pm.

Present: Councillor Owen Bierley (Chairman)
Councillor Mrs Tracey Coulson (Vice-Chairman) and
Councillor John McNeill (Vice-Chairman)

Councillor Stephen Bunney
Councillor Christopher Darcel
Councillor Michael Devine
Councillor Mrs Jessie Milne
Councillor Mrs Judy Rainsforth
Councillor Jim Snee
Councillor Mrs Mandy Snee
Councillor Mrs Anne Welburn
Councillor Trevor Young

In Attendance: Councillor Jane Ellis
Councillor Mrs Caralyne Grimble
Councillor Mrs Diana Rodgers
Councillor Mrs Angela White

Also In Attendance:
Sally Grindrod-Smith Assistant Director of Planning and Regeneration
Ady Selby Assistant Director of Commercial and Operational Services
Diane Krochmal Assistant Director Homes and Communities
Sarah Elvin Housing Communities Project Officer
Andy Gray Housing and Enforcement Manager
Emily Holmes Selective Licensing Officer
Katie Storr Democratic Services & Elections Team Manager (Interim)
Ele Snow Democratic and Civic Officer
James Welbourn Democratic and Civic Officer
Mr David Postle Wellbeing Service Manager for the Lincolnshire Health and Wellbeing Partnership

Apologies: Councillor Tom Regis

Membership: Councillor Steve England as substitute for Councillor Tom Regis

49 REGISTER OF ATTENDANCE

The Chairman welcomed all present to the virtual meeting of the Prosperous Communities

Committee and undertook the customary roll-call of Members, which was followed by a roll-call of Officers in attendance.

50 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no public participation for this meeting.

51 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

(a) Meeting of the Prosperous Communities Committee – 26 January 2021.

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Meeting of the Prosperous Communities Committee held on 26 January 2021 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

52 MATTERS ARISING SCHEDULE

The Chairman introduced the report advising Members that the report would be taken “as read” unless Members had any questions.

With no questions raised and with no requirement for a vote, the Matters Arising were **DULY NOTED**.

53 MEMBERS' DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor T. Coulson declared a personal item in agenda 7a regarding the rural designation report. She explained that having taken advice, there was no declarable interest that would prevent her from voting on the item however she stated she would feel more comfortable if she abstained from the vote.

54 PRESENTATION ITEM - LINCOLNSHIRE HEALTH AND WELL-BEING PARTNERSHIP

The Chairman welcomed Mr David Postle, Wellbeing Service Manager for the Lincolnshire Health and Wellbeing Partnership and explained there would be a short presentation with the opportunity for Members to ask questions.

Mr Postle explained that the Health and Wellbeing Partnership was a partnership between four District Councils having the benefit of knowing the area and communities they worked with and having a level of local knowledge that would have been missing with a larger, nation-wide private provider. East Lindsey District Council was the contract holder with the involvement of Senior Officers and Councillors in the governance of the contract. The service was commissioned by Lincolnshire County Council and had originally been provided by different providers across the county. This had led to service provision that was not equitable and the intention of the partnership was to ensure balanced access and provision of service across the area. The partnership also supported the delivery of other services,

such as housing, as well as providing analytical information in order to define and enhance service provision.

Mr Postle provided Members with a snapshot of data and explained that the most common reason for people accessing the service was stress-related, followed by mobility issues. Further analysis showed where referrals came from, down to ward level, as well as age of individuals. With this information they were able to compare not only across the county but nationwide. The majority of referrals were for those aged 55 and over. The service identified needs in order to enable an individual to remain independent. They also offered money management assistance, for example at times of bereavement or other life event. Once a referral was received, there was a full assessment of need as well as signposting and advice. Following assessment, the majority of individuals referred did go on to receive support.

Members heard that there was an identified gap regarding fully funded equipment through social care and the NHS and there was now a process in place to bridge that gap. Assistance provided could include services such as helping to navigate online shopping, or putting in touch with local suppliers who delivered, as well as installing key safes and provision of telecare equipment. Service users could also sign up to the 24/7 response service in situations where they may not have an emergency contact. These teams were based out of fire stations. The service also offered 'resettlement assistance', for example in cases where an individual was to be discharged from hospital but did not have local support, a worker would meet them from the ambulance, help them settle in, prepare the home in terms of putting lights on, heating, ensuring the basic provisions were there waiting for them. The service was working with hospitals to create the role of these resettlement link workers.

With regard to the referral process, Mr Postle explained that referrals came from the NHS, adult social care and voluntary organisations such as the Citizens' Advice Bureau. The aim was to make access to the service as simple as possible with links created to enable cross-agency referrals and service provision. For example, an individual may be referred to adult social care but not meet the threshold for their services in which case social care would refer to the wellbeing service. Likewise, if the wellbeing service was working with an individual who required a higher level of support, they would be referred to adult social care, with individuals sometimes moving between services as their need required.

In addition to the ongoing service provision, Members heard that the team had worked closely with District Councils during the global pandemic to assist with the emergency response.

The Chairman thanked Mr Postle for his presentation and invited questions from Members. There was further discussion regarding referral pathways and how the team ensured no one was left without the support they required. It was also enquired whether the service received referrals for individuals who would be better suited for adult social care with a higher level of need. Mr Postle reiterated the link working and how closely the teams worked with adult social care and the NHS to ensure individual needs were met appropriately. Members were highly supportive of the work undertaken by the wellbeing service and voiced their thanks and gratitude for the support they offered to those in need. The Chairman confirmed that Mr Postle's presentation would be shared with all Members and requested that he share the heartfelt thanks from Members with this team.

55 RURAL DESIGNATION

The Chairman invited the Senior Housing Strategy and Enabling Officer to present the report on rural designation. She explained that the purpose of the report was to seek approval to make an application to the Secretary of State to designate areas of West Lindsey as rural under Section 157 of Housing Act 1985. She explained that the reason for seeking rural designation at this time was because the Government was proposing to temporarily raise the small sites affordable housing threshold to up to either 40 or 50 residential units. The idea was that this new higher threshold will be implemented for an initial period of 18 months during which time the Government would '*monitor its impact before reviewing the approach*' – thereby leaving the door open to extending the time limit. It was considered that securing the rural designation for West Lindsey would allow the current affordable housing policy in the Central Lincolnshire Local Plan (LP11) to be retained and thus allow the authority to continue the delivery of affordable units on the same basis as now, which had had proven successful and sustainable. Members heard that the areas to be included in the rural designation were detailed in the appendices to the report.

The Chairman thanked the Officer for her detailed explanation and invited Members to ask questions. Vice-Chairman J. McNeill enquired as to the potential impact of a 4th tier governance review and whether the reorganisation of parish boundaries would have an effect on the designated areas. It was explained that the two criteria of population and density per hectare would have to be met and clarified that smaller villages would not trigger the requirement for affordable housing. It was agreed that, should a 4th tier governance review be undertaken, the boundaries and requirements under the rural designation would have to be taken into consideration. A Member of the Committee enquired as to the proposed 'trigger point' for affordable housing and it was confirmed that the intention was to maintain limits at current levels.

With no further questions and having been proposed and seconded, it was

RESOLVED that:

- a) the areas for Rural Designation be agreed as set out in Appendix 1; and
- b) the submission of an application from West Lindsey District Council for Rural Designation under Section 157 of the Housing Act 1985 to the Secretary of State be approved.

56 SELECTIVE LICENSING - UPDATE AND FUTURE PROPOSALS

The Housing and Enforcement Manager introduced a report for Members' consideration to provide an update on the current status of the Selective Licensing scheme and to advise on future proposals. He summarised that the Selective Licensing scheme in the Gainsborough South West Ward was approved at Prosperous Communities Committee on 22 March 2016. The scheme then came into force on 18 July 2016 for a five year period. As well as providing the current position of the scheme, the paper also set out the proposed approach to the final stages of the existing scheme and a timeline for future work in relation to selective licensing for West Lindsey District Council.

Members heard there were currently 748 licenses that had been granted within the designated area and a further 47 applications in progress. It was estimated that around 92% of properties were now licensed within the area. The original estimation for the number of licensed properties was 550. The Council was aware of 21 unlicensed properties however Members were advised that this number did fluctuate based on the proactive work undertaken to review each street.

It was explained that, whilst on conclusion of the scheme the licensing requirements would no longer be in place on landlords, the Council still had the ability to utilise all of its usual Housing Act and other regulatory powers to enable formal action to be taken as required. There would, however, be no ability to require additional conditions, which were placed on as part of the scheme, to be met by landlords. Following on from the scheme concluding in July 2021 it was proposed that further work was undertaken to consider whether a new Selective Licensing scheme was appropriate for West Lindsey. It was highlighted that the scheme had delivered a number of positive benefits for the area and the full scheme review would consider these in more detail. Members were advised of the timescales for future review, with proposals being presented to the Committee in the springtime of 2022.

There was significant discussion amongst Committee Members regarding the balance between supporting conscientious landlords whilst still addressing difficulties with less scrupulous landlords, as well as considering circumstances where tenants were difficult to engage with. It was acknowledged that some landlords had felt unnecessarily penalised by the scheme and some ongoing issues with other landlords and tenants had not been resolved. Councillor T. Young highlighted to Members that he had shared some photographs of the area in advance of the meeting and these demonstrated areas where problems had not been resolved. It was confirmed that these photographs had been received.

With regard to the role of the tenant, it was highlighted that the legislation was aimed at landlords however there was the need to better address how to support not only tenants, but also landlords who experienced problems with tenants. This would be considered as part of the review and for any future proposals. It was also stated that the review of the scheme would not be looked at in isolation and an holistic approach was already underway, for example with the implementation of the Viable Housing Solution. Members welcomed this approach.

Previous criticisms of the scheme were highlighted and a Member of the Committee expressed the need to involve all main stakeholders in discussions as to how to shape future options. Members acknowledged that there were ongoing areas to be addressed however it was felt that overall, the scheme had demonstrated a positive impact on the area and welcomed the options for improvements in the future.

In response to concerns as to the period between the existing scheme ending and any other scheme being implemented, Members were assured that under the powers provided by the Housing Act, the council would continue to work proactively in the area.

Having been moved and seconded, the Chairman took the vote and it was

RESOLVED that:

- a) the expiration of the existing Selective Licensing Scheme, on July 18

2021, be noted;

- b) the approach set out in section 7 of the report, in relation to the conclusion of the scheme, be agreed, meaning:
 - i. no further charges to be made after April 1 2021 for new applications
 - ii. inspections to be focussed on high risk issues
 - iii. the approach to formal action to take into consideration public interest and the 6 month period within which any offences can be formally progressed.
- c) further work, to be undertaken by Officers to explore options for a further selective licensing scheme, with these options to be presented back to Committee as per the timescales set out in the report, be approved.

57 RE-INTRODUCTION OF RENTS ON GAINSBOROUGH MARKET AND DISCRETIONARY BUSINESS GRANT FUNDING TO SUPPORT TRADERS

The Assistant Director of Operational and Commercial Services introduced a report for Members to consider the options for the reintroduction of rental charges for traders onto Gainsborough Market and the potential to use Discretionary Business Grants to support traders across the District. He explained that the report followed a paper considered by Prosperous Communities Committee in January 2021, when Members had resolved to welcome strategic work being undertaken by officers in order to understand options for the future delivery of street markets in the District. Members had also resolved to defer a decision to re-introduce rental charges for traders on Gainsborough Market to the next meeting of the Committee.

It was explained that there were two differences between the current report and the one considered by Members in January. Firstly, the initial recommendation to reintroduce rents onto the Market was scheduled for 1 April 2021. It was recognised that in order to still communicate the change effectively to stakeholders, it was now recommended that, should Members choose to re-introduce rental charges, they should be re-introduced from 1 June 2021. Secondly, an option to utilise Discretionary Business Grant funding to support regular and new traders on all Markets in West Lindsey had been introduced.

Members welcomed the suggesting of using the Discretionary Business Grant funding and were pleased to see measures being put in place to support traders. The recommendations within the report were moved and seconded. A Member of the Committee also proposed that the matter be referred to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in order to scrutinise the value for money of the market contract with Marshall's Yard.

Following further discussion, an amendment to the first recommendation was moved and seconded, for the re-introduction of rental charges to take effect from 1 September 2021. On taking the vote, with 7 against and 6 for, this amendment was not carried.

Members discussed the wider consideration of markets across the district and it was confirmed that there was work underway regarding this that would be reported to the

Committee in coming months. An holistic approach was being taken to consider other areas, however the paper for consideration currently was specific to the Gainsborough Market. Clarification was also sought as to how the Discretionary Business Grant funding could be used and it was confirmed that, whilst it could not be used to underwrite the rental rates, the intention was to support the traders who may not have previously benefited from the available funding.

A Member of the Committee returned to the earlier proposal for a referral to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. It was clarified that the purpose of this would be to scrutinise whether the work of the Farmers' Markets supported or otherwise, the general markets, and whether the original objectives had been met. On being seconded and voted upon, the proposal was carried to be considered as an additional recommendation for the Committee.

A Member of the Committee subsequently requested that the recommendations be taken to the vote in two parts. Firstly to deal with recommendations 1 & 2, next to deal with recommendations 3, 4 & 5. With this agreed, the Chairman took the first vote. With 8 for and 5 against it was

RESOLVED that:

- a) the re-introduction of rental charges on Gainsborough Market from 1 June 2021 be approved; and
- b) in recognising that further Covid Restrictions may impact on the 1 June implementation date, delegated authority be granted to the Assistant Director of Operational and Commercial Services, in consultation with the Chairman of Prosperous Communities Committee to vary the proposed implementation date in such circumstances. (All Members to be notified if the delegation is enacted).

The Chairman then undertook the second vote and it was unanimously

RESOLVED that:

- c) the proposal to utilise Discretionary Business Grants to support regular and new traders on Gainsborough General Market, Gainsborough Farmers Market, Market Rasen Market and Caistor Market be approved; and
- d) the Discretionary Business Grants Policy to support regular and new traders be agreed under the urgent delegated decision provision afforded to the Head of Paid Service, in consultation with the two Policy Committee Chairmen and the Leader of the Opposition, in line with other decisions made around Business Grants during the pandemic; and
- e) a referral be made to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to undertake a piece of work around support for the general market in Gainsborough alongside the Farmers' Market.

Prosperous Communities Committee – 16 March 2021
Subject to Call-in. Call-in will expire at 5pm on 7 June 2021

58 WORKPLAN

Members gave consideration to the Committee Workplan.

With no comments or questions, and with no requirement for a vote, the Work Plan was **DULY NOTED.**

The meeting concluded at 8.52 pm.

Chairman